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AUTHOR Stevens, Ann; Mills, Belen
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to compare childrearing practices of mothers and fathers who cared for their 4-year-old children at home with those who enrolled their children in group day care centers. The Child-Rearing Practices Questionnarie was administered to 50 married couples with a 4-year-old to determine their childrearing practices. Items on the questionnaire were divided into seven factors which included: (1) use of punishment versus reason; (2) promotion of independence versus dependence; (3) levels of rules of behavior used; (4) amount of spouse involvement; (5) levels of rewarding children; (6) preference for older versus younger children; and (7) motivational distortion. Comparison of the mothers' responses on the questionnaire revealed no differences on childrearing factors. The mothers of the children in day care and home care perceived their role as providing nurturing and child care. The fathers' responses on the questionnaire revealed several differences between fathers of home care and day care children. The primary differences concerned factors dealing with the number of rules, the type of rewards given to children, and the preference for older over younger children. (RJC)

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Abstract

The Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire was administered to fifty married couples with four-year-old children. The children were cared for at home by their mothers or enrolled in group day care. The mothers of both groups agreed on all six child-rearing factors. The fathers of the home care children indicated a higher level of behavioral rules and more rewards for their daughters than the fathers of day care children. The fathers of the day care children indicated no preference for male children, the younger children and more rewards for their sons than the fathers of home care children.

Child-Rearing Practices of Parents with Home and Day Care Children

In the past decades, the numbers of married mothers, with children under the age of six, entering the labor force to 49.9% by 1982 (U. S. Department of Labor, 1982) and the numbers continue to increase. The change in the maternal employment rate has led to adjustments in the parent's child-rearing practices and an increase in the use of alternative child care arrangements.

The guidance theory as advanced by Hilda Maher (1978) described the young child (0 to 6 years) as a reflection of the child's parents. Each parent sees characteristics of himself/herself in the child. For example, the fathers who valued achievement expected their children to value achievement (Gale, King, & Megland, 1980). They reacts to the child as if the child possessed that trait (positive or negative). The child learns to display the expected personality traits of his parents until the child is mature enough to define his own personality traits within the personality traits known to him. Maher (1978)

proposed that the addition of a major caretaker to the child's environment will add an additional set of personality traits. The child becomes a reflection of his mother, father and caretaker.

The parents and their child rearing practices do have an effect on the adult their child will become. According to Dubow, et.al., (1987) the parent's absence of rejection, use of reason in dealing with the child, and the identification between parent child was associated with higher levels of adult ego development. Agreement between the parents on their parenting practices provided a predictable environment and was associated with the child's ego control and acceptance of responsibility (Block, et.al., 1981). Granting the child independence at an early age helps the child apply his personal standards and test his personal competencies (Trudewind, 1982). The parent's reliance on rewards to encourage the child's achievement undermines the child's interest in related tasks (Hechausen, 1982; Fabes, 1986, however, rewards do encourage adult-child interaction (Fabes, 1986).

In the studies conducted by Blehar (1974) and Roopnarine and Lamb (1978) there appeared to be an

adjustment in the relationship between the young day care child and his mother. Blehar (1974) found that day care children explored less, cried more often and resisted the mother more often in the strange situation than the home care children. The home care children interacted with their mothers more often than the day care children (Blehar, 1974). In their study of attachment, Roopnarine and Lamb (1978) observed that the day care children were less apt to seek contact when the mother returned and less apt to cry during separation than the home care children.

Johnson (1977) studied the social behaviors of day care and home care children. The day care children spent more time pleasing, cooperating with, conversing with, and questioning another than the home care children (Johnson, 1977). The home care children spent more time procuring services from another, and questioning and eating at the same time than the day care children (Johnson, 1977). In Schwarz, Strickland and Krolick's (1974) study the day care children were less cooperative with adults, and more aggressive towards children and adults than home care children. The Johnson (1977) and Schwarz, Strickland and Krolick

(1974) studies agreed that the day care children were more active than the home care children.

Given that there are observable differences between children enrolled in day care and children cared for at home, the differences could be due to differences in the mother-father-child constellation. Mahrer (1978) stated that in the day care family the group is enlarged to include the caretaker. The Perception of Parents Interview Schedule developed by Kagan and Lemkin (1960) was used by Dowell (1970) and Mills and Stevens (1985) to study the parental perceptions held by young children. Dowell (1970) reported that the father was the support and punisher for his child. The mother was the nurturer who read stories and tucked children in bed (Dowell, 1970). The Mills and Stevens (1985) study compared the views of day care and home care four-year-old children. The children concurred in the father's role as punisher and the mother's role as nurturer (Mills & Stevens, 1985). The day care children and home care children agreed on the day-to-day role of both parents (Mills & Stevens, 1985). The day care girls did name the mother as the smarter parent and the parent who would protect them

more often that the home care girls (Mills & Stevens, 1981).

If there are observable differences in the behaviors and the parental perceptions of day care and home care children, are the differences due to differences in the parents' child-rearing behaviors or to the intervention of the day care system? The current study asks if the differences could be due to the child-rearing practices of parents with children enrolled in the day care center and parents who care for their children at home. The parents in the study chose to place the child in the day care center rather than place them in the center for economic reasons (i.e. need for two incomes).

The purpose of this study was to compare the child-rearing practices of mother and fathers who cared for their four-year-old children at home, and those who enrolled their children in group day care centers. The child-rearing practices were defined as the six child-rearing factors measured by the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire.

Method

Subjects

The sample consisted of 50 married couples with a four-year-old child. The middle-class Caucasian couples resided in Leon County, Florida. Married, middle-class couples were selected to maximize the use of maternal employment as an option rather than a necessity. The couples, who chose the option of maternal employment, placed their child in a licensed, commercial day care center. The 25 day care children had been enrolled in group day care for 12 to 50 months, with a median of 39.5 months for boys and 35 months for girls. The 25 home care children had been cared for at home by their mothers.

The mothers ranged in age from 25 years to 49 years with a median of 31 years for home care mothers and 32 years for day care mothers. All of the mothers had graduated from high school. The day care mothers included 12 with high school degrees, 7 with college degrees, and 6 with graduate school degrees. The home care mothers included 10 with high school degrees, 12 with college degrees, and 3 with graduate school degrees. The mothers of day care children were employed full-time in professional (15), managerial (2) or technical (8) occupations. None of the mothers of

the home care children were employed.

The 50 fathers ranged in age from 27 to 56 years, with a median age of 33 years for fathers of day care children and 34 years for fathers of home care children. All of the fathers had graduated from high school. The day care fathers included 13 with high school degrees, 18 with college degrees, and 10 with graduate school degrees. The home care father included 10 with high school degrees, 10 with college degrees, and 5 with graduate school degrees. The day care fathers were employed in professional (11), managerial (4), technical (10), and sales (2) occupations. The home care fathers were employed in professional (10), managerial (6), technical (6), and sales (3) occupations.

Materials

The 1978 edition of the Children's Own Practices questionnaire was used to determine the parent's child-rearing practices. The questionnaire developed by Graham and Beller, included 140 items with five forced choice answers. The items were divided into seven factors. The questionnaire was cross-validated by Bieman-Copland and Cattell (1977).

The factors were defined by Barton (1981) as:

Factor 1: Used of Punishment vs. Reason: A high scores represents a belief in a use of physical punishment in controlling behavior. A low score represents a belief in reason to control behavior.

Factor 2: Promotion of Independence vs. Dependence: A high score indicates that the parent encourages dependent behavior. A low score indicates that the parent encourages independence and autonomy.

Factor 3: Levels of Rules of Behavior Used: A high score indicates a range of rules and regulations for acceptable behavior. A low score indicates a lack of rules.

Factor 4: Amount of Spouse Involvement: A high score indicates that one spouse considers the other spouse to have a high level of involvement with the children. A low score indicates little involvement.

Factor 5: Levels of Rewarding Children: A high score indicates that the parents gives many rewards to reinforce acceptable behaviors. A low score indicates few or no rewards.

Factor 6: Preference for Older vs. Younger Children: A high score indicates a preference for older

children (5-8 years old) who are able to care for themselves. A low score indicates a preference for younger children (infant-3 years old) who need care and cuddling.

Personality Factor: Motivational Distortion: A high score indicates the use of "faking" to increase positive appearance. A low score indicates the lack of faking to improve other's opinion of respondent.

Procedure

The parents of four-year-old children residing in [illegible] were invited to participate in a study of [illegible] children. The parents of the children were mailed a questionnaire. The final sample included the couples that returned an answer sheet from both parents.

The data were analyzed using an analysis of variance. An alpha level of .05 was used to define significance.

Results

The hypothesis that there is no difference in the child-rearing practices of mothers who have four-year-old children in day care or cared for at home was accepted. The mothers' scores on the six child-rearing

factors were not significantly different (see Table 1). However, it should be noted that there was a difference on the Personality Factor. The mothers of home care children scored higher than the mothers of day care children on the Motivational Distortion factor (F = 4.439; p = .008).

Insert Table 1 here

The hypothesis that there is no difference in the child-rearing practices of fathers who have four-year-old children enrolled in day care or cared for at home was not accepted. As seen in Table 2, the fathers of home care girls scored higher than the fathers of day care girls on the Levels of Rewarding Children factor (F = 3.213; p = .03). The fathers of day care boys scored higher than the fathers of home care sons on the Levels of Rewarding Children factor (F = 3.213; p = .03). The fathers of home care children scored higher on the Levels of Rules of Behavior Used factor than the fathers of day care children (F = 5.10; p = .004). The fathers of home care boys scored higher on the Levels of Rules of Behavior Used factor than the

fathers of day care children scored higher than the fathers of home care children on the Preference for Older vs. Younger Children factor ($F = 3.956$; $p = .013$).

Insert Table 2 here

Discussion

The comparison of the mother's responses on the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire revealed no differences on the child-rearing factors. The mothers of the four year old children in day care and home care perceived their role as providing nurturing and child care. The mothering role does not change when the child is enrolled in a group day care center.

However, there was a difference between the mothers on the personality factor, Motivational Distortion. The mothers of the day care children appeared to be more honest in dealing with others than did the mothers of home care children. The mothers of the home care children seemed to be more concerned about having others think highly of them and their children than the mothers of day care children. The

children could be a source of recognition for their home-bound mothers. For the mothers who places her children in day care, her recognition comes from her vocation and her children. The differences between the mothers seemed to be greater for the mothers of boys than for mothers of girls. The boy's maturity seems to be more important than the girl's maturity. The boy is considered to be the future "bread winner" for his family and the child who will carry on the family name and traditions.

The fathers responses on the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire revealed several differences between the fathers of home care and day care children. The fathers of home care children scored higher on the Levels of Rules of Behavior Used Factor than the fathers of day care children. The home care fathers had more rules for their children's behavior than the fathers of day care children. The home care parents bear the sole responsibility for the rules their children must follow. The parents of day care children may relax the rules for their children as a reaction to the restrictions of the day care center.

The fathers of home care boys scored higher on the

Levels of Rules of Behavior Used Factor than the fathers of day care boys. As the primary role model for his son, the home care father is concerned with the behaviors his son displays. The day care boy's father shares his sex-role model with others, e.g. other boys and adults at the center.

The fathers of day care boys scored higher than the fathers of home care boys on the Levels of Rewarding Children Factor. The fathers of day care boys used more rewards in reaction to desired behaviors performed by their sons than the fathers of home care boys. The day care father may feel that material rewards will be effective in rewarding his son after a day at the day care center. The home care fathers may feel that the non-material rewards will be effective after a day with his mother.

The father of home care girls scored higher than the fathers of day care girls on the Levels of Rewarding Children factor. Fathers are considered to be the independent trainers and achievement motivators of their children (Hoffman, 1977). The fathers of home care girls assumes a greater role for the appropriate sex-role development of his daughter while the fathers

of day care girls share their responsibility with others at the day care center.

The father of day care children scored higher than the fathers of home care children on the Preference for Older vs. Younger Children factor. The older child (5-8 years) has a higher level of verbal and physical skills and , therefore, he can participate in activities with his father and assist with household chores. The younger child (0-3 years) requires more physical care and supervision than the older child. The younger child may accept attention from his father and does not assist with the household chores.

The fathers of day care girls scored higher than the fathers of home care girls on the Preference for Older vs. Younger Children factor. The fathers of day care girls may be concerned with the cost of day care and the girl's ability to help her mother after a long day at work. The fathers of home care girls may not be as interested in having his "little girl" grow up too fast.

In summary, the mothers of home care and day care children agreed on the child-rearing factors. The mothers' perception of 'motherhood' and the mothering

role was constant despite alternate child care arrangements.

The fathers on the use of reason, promotion of independence, and their wives involvement with the child. The primary differences appeared on the factors dealing with the number of rules and the type of rewards given their child. There appeared to be a difference in the preference for older over younger children.

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Table 1:

Mean Scores for Mothers of Home Care and Day Care Children on the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire

	Home Care		Day Care			
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl		
Factor	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	P*
1	44.15	44.38	49.50	43.21	2.095	ns
2	39.38	40.00	40.50	38.37	.242	ns
3	36.31	35.00	31.90	34.40	1.430	ns
4	55.31	52.38	53.10	51.27	1.507	ns
5	35.	36.45	38.50	34.67	.556	ns
6	37.69	39.85	42.30	37.93	.941	ns
7	14.54	12.77	10.90	12.40	4.439	.008

* Alpha = .05.

Table 2:

Mean Scores for Fathers of Home Care and Day Care Children on the Child-Rearing Practices Questionnaire

	Home Care		Day Care			
	Boy	Girl	Boy	Girl		
Factor	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	P*
1	42.54	45.77	50.10	44.13	2.350	ns
2	37.69	37.54	34.50	36.60	1.129	ns
3	37.62	34.63	30.30	34.60	5.062	.004
4	41.92	45.62	46.70	43.13	.975	ns
5	37.15	42.15	39.80	34.40	3.213	.031
6	24.62	30.54	30.00	36.00	3.458	.019
7	12.31	10.92	11.60	11.73	.657	ns

* Alpha = .05.